

#### **IV. JACKSON COUNTY - POPULATION, LAND USE, AND TRAFFIC**

##### **JACKSON COUNTY**

Jackson County lies in the mountainous area of southwestern North Carolina. The approximate land area of Jackson County is 314,000 acres, or 490 square miles. There are five major mountain ranges in the county. The county is bounded on the east by the Balsam Mountain Range and the Tanasee Ridge. The Tanasee connects with the Blue Ridge, while the Blue Ridge lies west across the southern edge of the county to meet the lower range, which forms the western border.

Jackson County is bordered on the south by South Carolina, the southwest by Macon County, the northwest by Swain County, the northeast by Haywood County, and the southeast by Transylvania County.

##### **POPULATION AND GROWTH**

Between 1960 and 1990, the total population of Jackson County increased from 17,780 to 26,846. That is an annual compounded growth rate of 1.4%. Overall, the County growth rate represented a 39% increase over the past three decades. Over 40% of Jackson County's population exists in the townships of Cullowhee and the county seat, Sylva.

The projected population for Jackson County is 28,200 for 2010 (furnished by the North Carolina State Data Center). This estimate is based on an annual growth rate of .25%, which is considerably lower than the projected average annual growth rate for North Carolina (.99%). Again, the difference may be offset by the increasing number of permanent retirement residents.

According to State Data Center Technical Report No. 5, there were a total of 11,310 employed residents of Jackson County in 1975. Census counts for 1990 show an increase of 7.0% (12,100) of total employed residents.

In 1992, the US Bureau of Census released County Employment commuting patterns for every county in North Carolina. This data is based on the 1990 Census of Population and Housing survey and should be used as an indicator of the employment travel patterns only. The following is a statistical summary of Jackson County commuting patterns.